

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. **(Currently Amended)** Method of controlling exhaust flaps in a vehicle exhaust system comprising triggering a solenoid valve by an engine control unit to open or close the exhaust flaps as a function of at least one stored engine characteristics map which includes the rotational speed, engine load, the gear engaged and optionally additional control variables ~~so as to for~~ change increasing and muffling exhaust sound ~~optimization and optionally at least one of~~ produced over a range of engine running conditions based on power and torque.

2. **(Original)** Method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising storing a plurality of engine characteristic maps in the engine control unit.

3. **(Previously Presented)** Method as claimed in Claim 2, further comprising selecting an appropriate engine characteristic map based on preselectable criteria.

4. **(Previously Presented)** Method as claimed in Claim 3, further comprising switching between street vehicle operation and racecar operation with selection of the appropriate engine characteristic map.

5. **(Currently Amended)** Exhaust system, comprising triggerable exhaust flaps, a vacuum storage device operatively connected via a nonreturn valve to an intake system and to an exhaust system via a triggerable solenoid valve in parallel therewith, the solenoid valve being triggerable to open and close the exhaust flaps as a function of at least one stored engine characteristics map which includes the rotational speed, engine load and the engaged gear and optionally additional control variables for selectively increasing and muffling exhaust so as to change and sound optimization and optionally at least one of produced over a range of engine running states based on power and torque.

6. **(Previously Presented)** Exhaust system as claimed in Claim 5, wherein an appropriate one of the engine characteristics maps is selected in the control unit from the at least one stored engine characteristics map depending on a preselectable requirement.

7. **(Previously Presented)** Exhaust system as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the selected appropriate engine characteristics map is configured to provide switching between operation of the vehicle as a street vehicle and as a racecar.